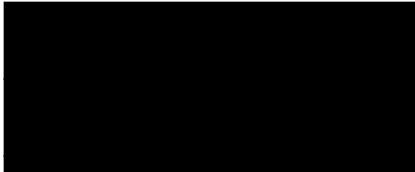


# JUVENILE COURT

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## Information Source

The data in this section was taken from yearly statistical reports created from the Juvenile Justice Information System by the Utah Administrative Office of the Courts. The Juvenile Justice Information System is a database that includes critical juvenile justice information for use by both the Juvenile Court and by the Utah Division of Youth Corrections.

## Findings

A referral to the Juvenile Court is a package of work for the Juvenile Court. One referral may contain a single event, such as one misdemeanor offense, or it may contain several events, such as two felonies and three misdemeanors. In either case, only one referral occurred.

Between 1988 and 1994, total offenses referred to the Juvenile Court increased 26.8%, resulting in an additional 16,162 offenses referred. The largest portion of this increase occurred in 1992. Total offenses referred includes referrals for felonies, misdemeanors, infractions, status offenses, and administrative actions.

During the same period, criminal offenses referred to the Juvenile Court increased 58.2%. More specifically, felony offenses referred increased 86.8% (3,132 additional referrals) and misdemeanor offenses referred increased 47.2% (10,775 additional referrals).

Of those referred to the Juvenile Court where a juvenile's race was reported, 81.9% were white, 10.3% Hispanic, 2.9% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2.0% black, and 1.4% Asian Pacific Islander. However, of the total referrals, 43.8% had no reported race. From these race figures, it appears that racial/ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented compared to their relative proportions in Utah's general population.

The age of juveniles referred to the Juvenile Court has remained relatively stable for the past six years at an average of 15.5 years of age. The average age of person and property felony offenders increased very slightly and the average age of public order felony offenders and misdemeanants decreased slightly. It does not appear that juveniles referred to the Juvenile Court are getting younger, as many believe.

Most of the juveniles referred are male; however, the percent of female involvement in the system increases as the severity of the offenses decrease.

Ninety percent of the felony offenses, 61% of the misdemeanor/infraction offenses, and 28% of the status offenses are petitioned to the Juvenile Court. Many of the misdemeanor/infractions and status offenses are handled through non-judicial sanctions, such as fines and community service hours.

There has been an 85.3% increase in felonies filed in Juvenile Court between 1988 and 1994. Specifically, there has been a 120% increase in person felonies filed, 76% increase in property felonies filed, 146% increase in public order felonies filed, and 84% increase in misdemeanor/infractions filed. There has been a 35.3% increase in petitions disposed of between 1991 and 1994.

Juveniles on probation increased by 383 (34.3%) between 1989 and 1994, while the ages of those on probation remained stable. The offense history of those placed on probation increased. In 1994, the average probationer had 4.2 felonies, 12.6 misdemeanor/infractions, and 2.5 status offenses.

In 1994, 78% of ordered restitution was collected (\$969,835); 74% of fines/fees were collected (\$1,309,229); and 73% of the community service hours were collected (327,610 hours).

# JUVENILE COURT

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## **Referrals**

**A referral is a unit or package of work for the Juvenile Court. One referral may contain a single event, such as one misdemeanor offense, or it may contain several events, such as two felonies and three misdemeanors. In either case, only one referral occurred.**

**When several offenses are included in a single referral, the most serious offense of the group is identified as the offense of referral. In assessing the different offense types being referred, it is important to remember only the most serious offense of the referral is recorded.**

## **Offenses Referred to Utah's Juvenile Court, total and by offense**

- ❖ Total offenses referred include administrative referrals, status offenses referred, infraction offenses referred, misdemeanor offenses referred, and felony offenses referred. Criminal offenses referred include only felony, misdemeanor, infraction, and status offense referrals.
- ❖ Total offenses referred to Juvenile Court increased by 26.8% over the past seven years resulting in 16,162 additional offenses referred. Offense referrals remained relatively stable until 1992 when they increased over 10,000.
- ❖ The proportion of criminal offenses referred that were felonies increased 18.5% between 1988 and 1994. The proportion of criminal offenses referred that were misdemeanors decreased 7.0% during the same period.
- ❖ Between 1988 and 1994, the absolute number of criminal offenses referred increased 58.2% (19,513 additional offenses), felony offenses referred increased 86.8% (3,132 additional offenses), misdemeanor offenses referred increased 47.2% (10,775 additional offenses), infraction offenses referred increased 27.9% (498 additional offenses), and status offenses referred increased 96.1% (5,108 additional offenses).

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## **POINT OF INTEREST**

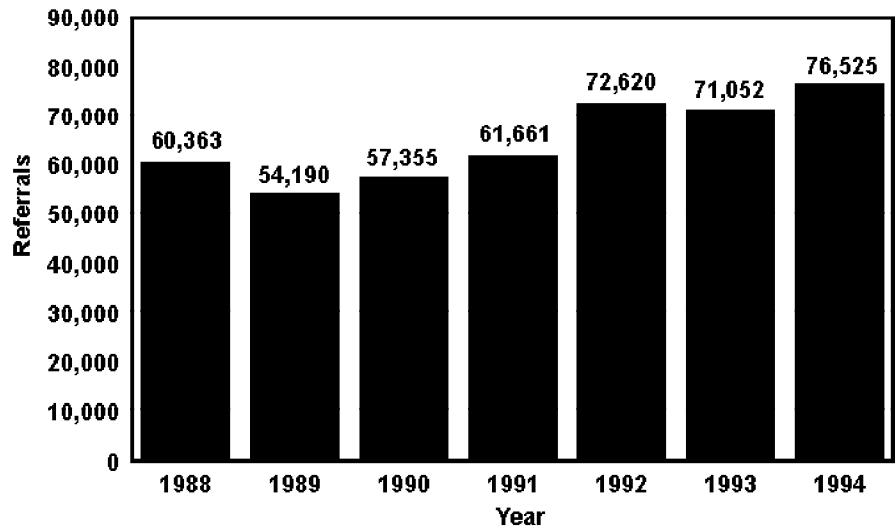
It is interesting to note that although total criminal offenses referred to Juvenile Court increased by 58.2% over the past seven years, the juvenile population between the ages of 10 and 17 increased 30% over the past decade, and total juvenile arrests increased by 29% over the past decade. The increase in criminal offenses referred to Juvenile Court is nearly double the increase in juvenile population over the period examined. This discrepancy has not been assessed. However, it is clear that all criminal offenses referred to Juvenile Court are not necessarily the result of a formal arrest.

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## Chart 3.0

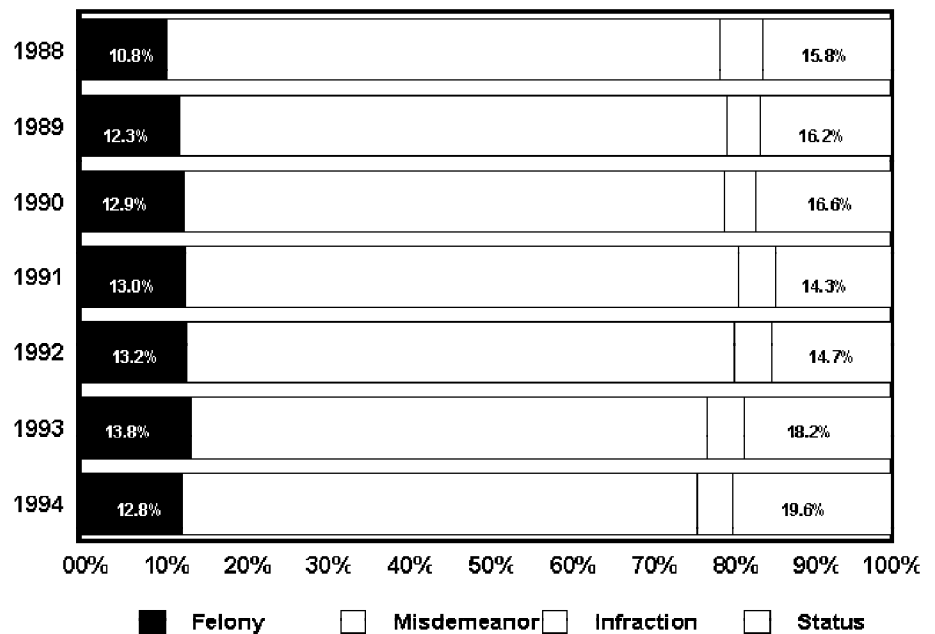
### Total Offenses Referred to Juvenile Court and Offense Type of Intake Referral, 1988 to 1994

#### Total Offenses Referred to Juvenile Court



Source: Table 3.0

#### Offense Type of Criminal Intake Referral



Source: Table 3.1

## JUVENILE COURT

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### Age and race of youth handled by the Juvenile Court, 1994

- ❖ Of the youth handled by the Juvenile Court in 1994 where race was reported, 81.9% were White, 10.3% Hispanic, 2.9% American Indian, 2.0% Black, and 1.4% Oriental. However, of the total youth handled by the Juvenile Court, 43.8% had no reported race. Therefore, the racial proportions reported are questionable. Utah's population in 1990 of those aged 10 to 17 was 91.1% white, 5.1% Hispanic, 1.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1.4% American Indian/Eskimo, and .6% Black.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Over the past six years, the average age of the youth handled by the Juvenile Court has remained stable. In 1989 the average age of youth handled by the Court was 15.63 years of age. In 1994, the average age was 15.50 years of age. Over the period examined, the average age of juveniles referred to Juvenile Court decreased .83%.

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### POINT OF INTEREST

It is clear that at the court intake stage that juvenile racial minorities are disproportionately represented when compared to their proportions in the general population. Difficulties arise in attempting to identify exactly where, when, why or how this minority over-representation occurs. The issue is currently under examination by the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice. The Board will try to identify both the roots of the problem and possible methods for addressing the problem.

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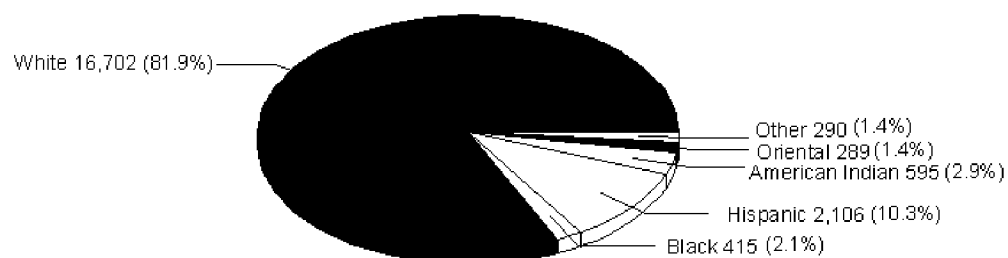
<sup>1</sup> 1990 Census data was calculated based upon information found in "1990 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, Utah." U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census. Page 46.

## Chart 3.1

### Race of Youth Handled by Juvenile Court 1994; Age of Youth Handled by Juvenile Court, 1989 to 1994

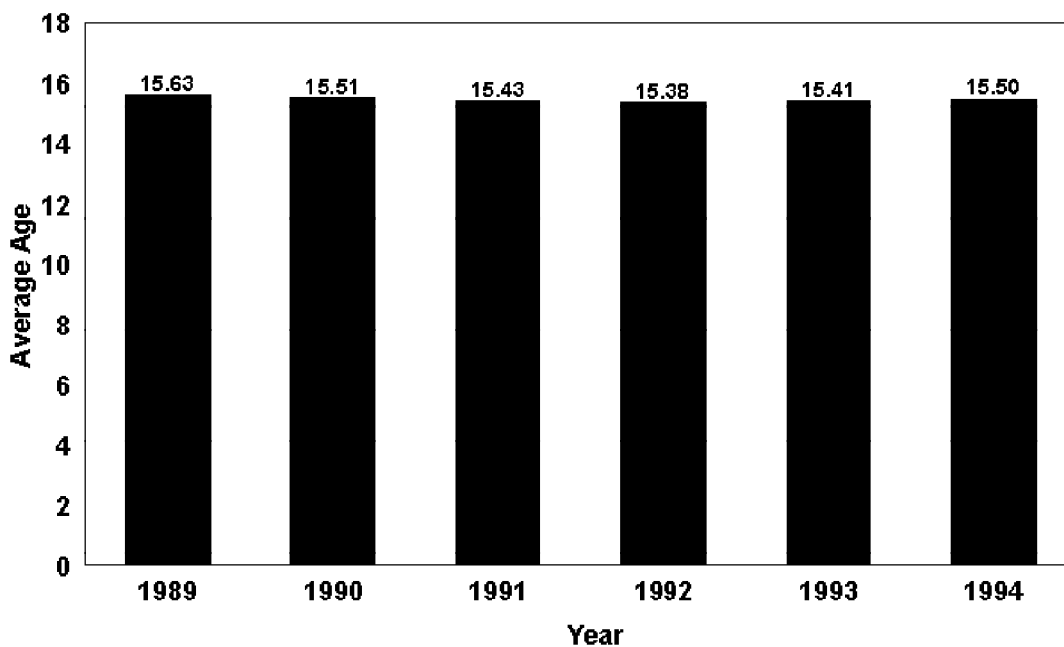
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#### Race of Youth Handled by Juvenile Court, 1994



Source: Table 3.2

#### Average Age of Juvenile Criminal Offenders Referred



Source: Table 3.3

## JUVENILE COURT

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### Age of youth person and property felony offenders handled by the Juvenile Court

***The figures that follow depict ages of youth handled by the Juvenile Court between 1989 and 1994. The figures will show if the average age of juveniles handled by the Juvenile Court is changing with the passage of time.***

- ❖ The average age of juvenile person felony offenders increased from 14.94 years of age in 1989 to 15.19 years of age in 1994. This reflects a 1.7% increase in the average age of juvenile person felony offenders over the period.
- ❖ The average age of juvenile property felony offenders increased from 15.44 years of age in 1989 to 15.56 years of age in 1994. This reflects a .8% increase in the average age of juvenile property felony offenders over the period.
- ❖ Although the differences between the average age of person felony offenders and property felony offenders is small, it does appear that, on average, the person felony offenders are younger than property felony offenders. It is clear that there have not been large changes in the average ages of juvenile offenders in these offense types.

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### POINT OF INTEREST

It would be misleading to say the age of serious youth offenders handled by the Juvenile Court has declined. Although the average age of juvenile offenders decreased .8% between 1989 and 1994 (from 15.63 to 15.50 years of age), the average age of the most serious offenders (person and property felony offenders) increased. The average age of juvenile person felony offenders increased 1.7% from 14.94 years of age to 15.19 years of age. The average age of juvenile property felony offenders increased .8% from 15.44 years of age to 15.56 years of age.

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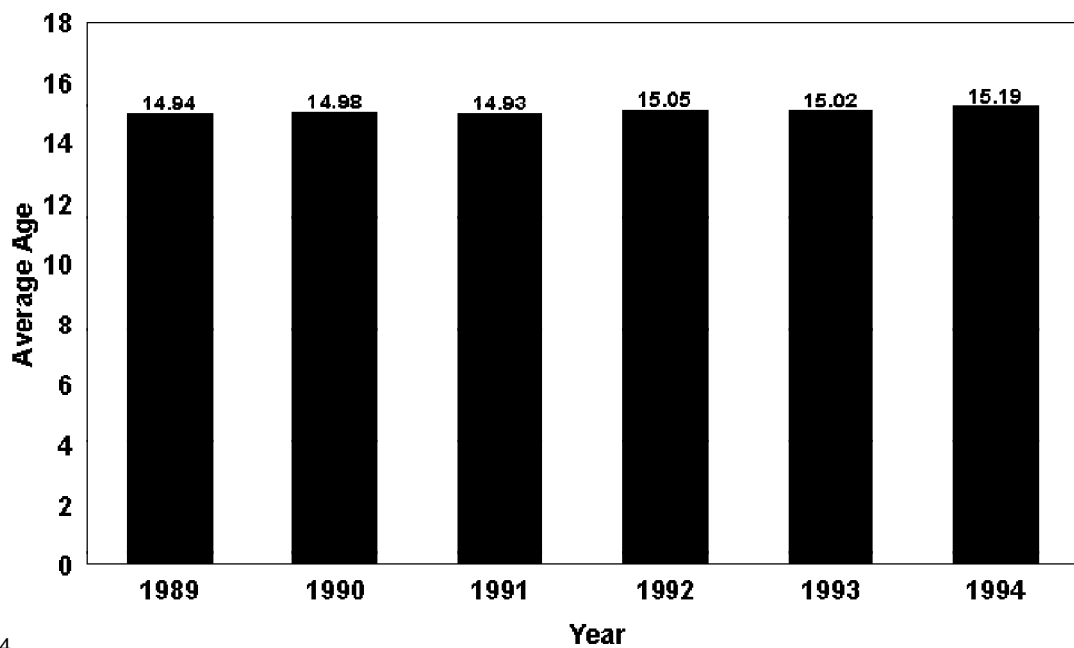
## Chart 3.2

### Age of Youth Handled by Juvenile Court by Offense Category, 1989 to 1994

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#### Average Age of Juvenile Person Felony Offenders

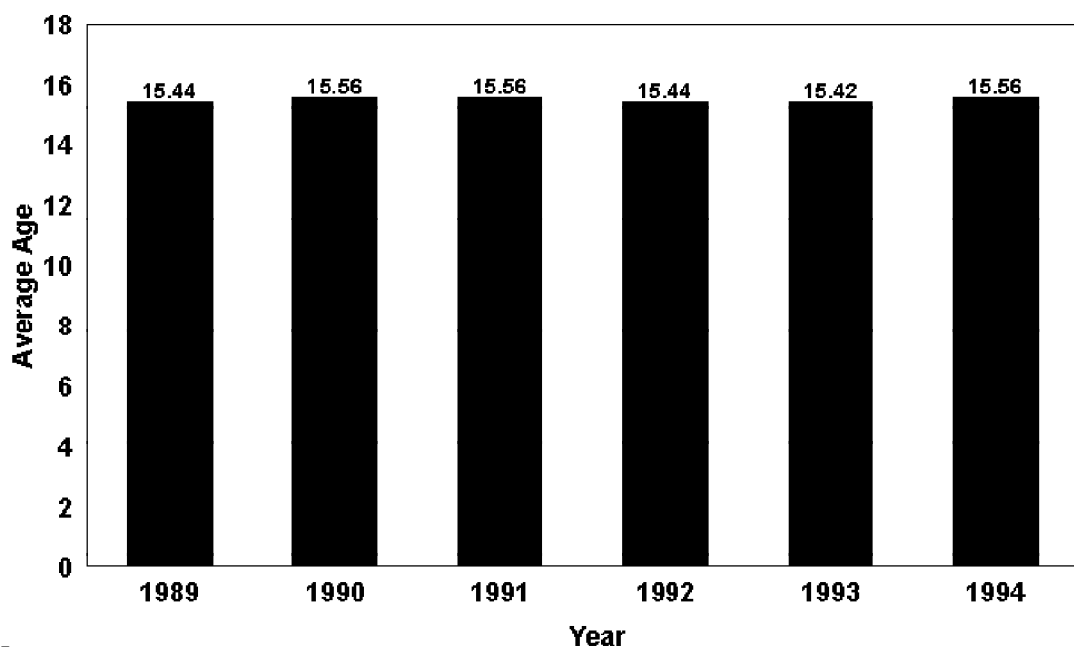
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Source: Table 3.4

#### Average Age of Juvenile Property Felony Offenders

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Source: Table 3.5

## JUVENILE COURT

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### Age of youth public order felony and misdemeanor offenders handled by the Juvenile Court

- ❖ The average age of juvenile public order felony offenders decreased from 16.40 years of age in 1989 to 16.15 years of age in 1994. This reflects a 1.5% decrease in the average age of juvenile public order felony offenders over the period.
- ❖ The average age of juvenile misdemeanor offenders decreased slightly from 15.54 years of age in 1989 to 15.53 years of age in 1994. This reflects a .1% decrease in the average age of juvenile misdemeanor offenders over the period.

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### POINT OF INTEREST

In 1994, the average age of the person felony offenders had the lowest average age (15.19 years of age). The highest average age was among the public order felony offenders (16.15 years of age). Public order felony offenses were the only felony offenses where the average age decreased between 1989 and 1994. Looking at the figure, it is clear that younger age groups are becoming involved in public order felony offenses. The average age of misdemeanor offenders was nearly the same in 1994 as it was in 1989.

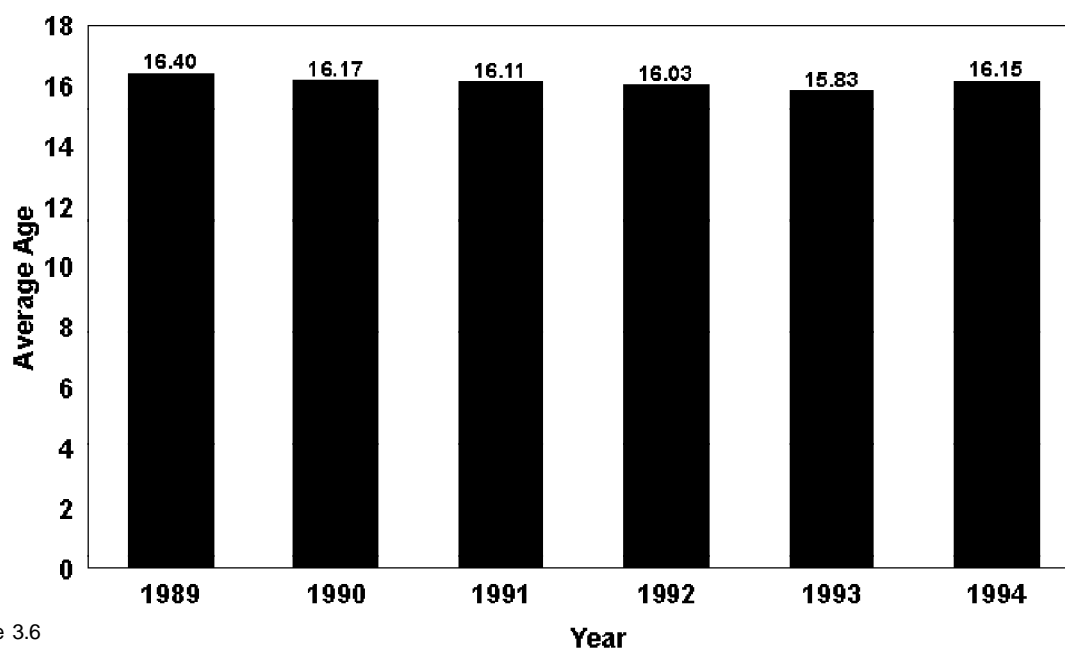
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## Chart 3.2

### Age of Youth Handled by Juvenile Court by Offense Category, 1989 to 1994

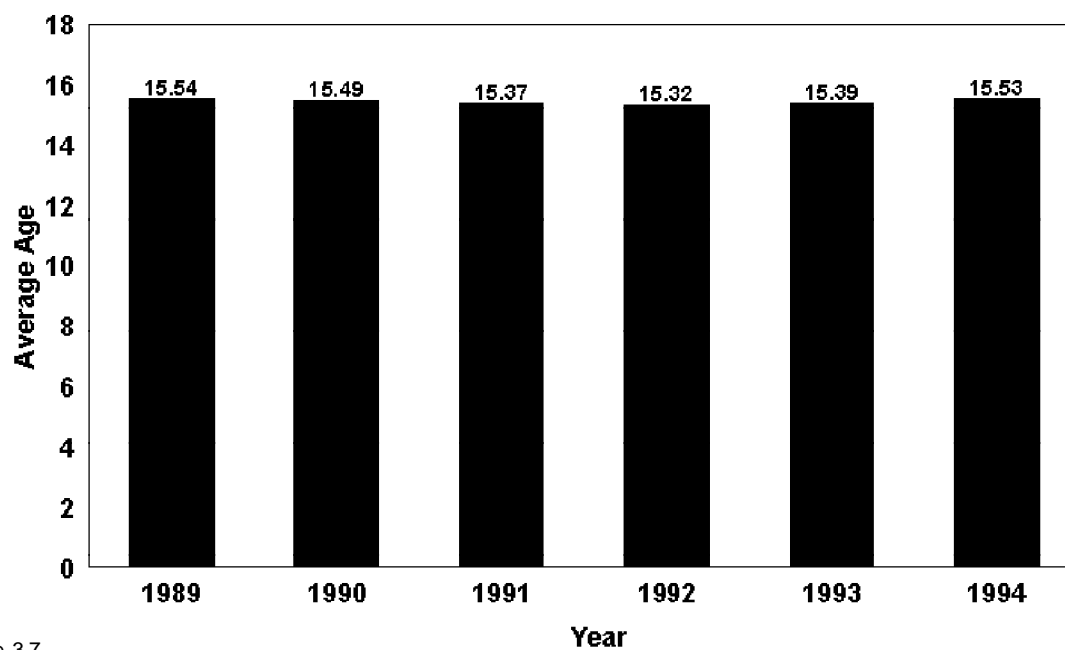
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#### Average Age of Juvenile Public Order Felony Offenders



Source: Table 3.6

#### Average Age of Juvenile Misdemeanor Offenders



Source: Table 3.7

## JUVENILE COURT

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### Gender of youth handled by Juvenile Court, and how cases were handled at Juvenile Court intake

- ❖ In 1994, it is clear that most of the youth offenders handled by the Juvenile Court are male. However, the proportion of youth that are female increases as the severity of the offense decreases. For both capital and person felony offenses, males accounted for 100% and 92% of the youth offenders, respectively. Females accounted for 28% of the status offenses, 21% of the misdemeanors, and 18% of the infractions.
- ❖ In 1994, the greatest portion of juvenile felony offenders handled by the Juvenile Court Intake were petitioned to Juvenile Court (90%). Smaller portions of misdemeanor/infraction offenses and status offenses were petitioned to the Juvenile Court, 61% and 28% respectively. Between 7% and 10% of all offenses received no action or were referred to another agency. A large percentage of misdemeanor/infraction and status offenses (24% and 39%) were handled with a non-judicial action such as warnings, restitution, or community service hours.

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### POINT OF INTEREST

Combining all offense types handled by Juvenile Court Intake in 1994, the largest portion (38,682) were petitioned to the Juvenile Court. Another large portion (15,946) were handled through a non-judicial action. Together, petitions and non-judicial actions account for most dispositions by intake in the Juvenile Court.

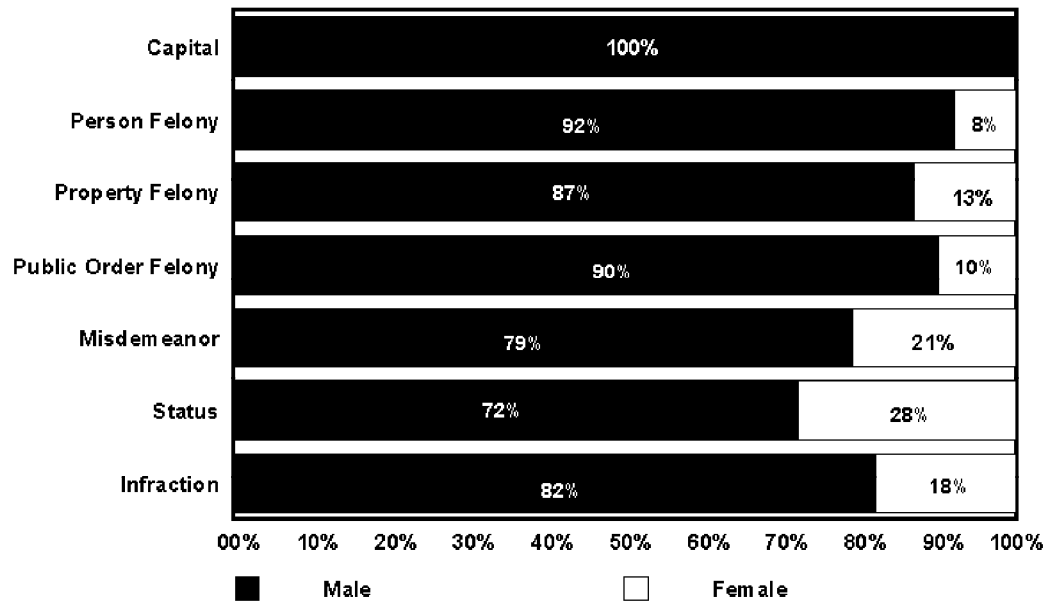
The pattern of gender involvement in the Juvenile Justice system is similar to the entire justice system. Males are more involved in criminal behavior than females. The disparity is generally larger among person offenses as compared to property or nonviolent offenses.

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## Chart 3.3

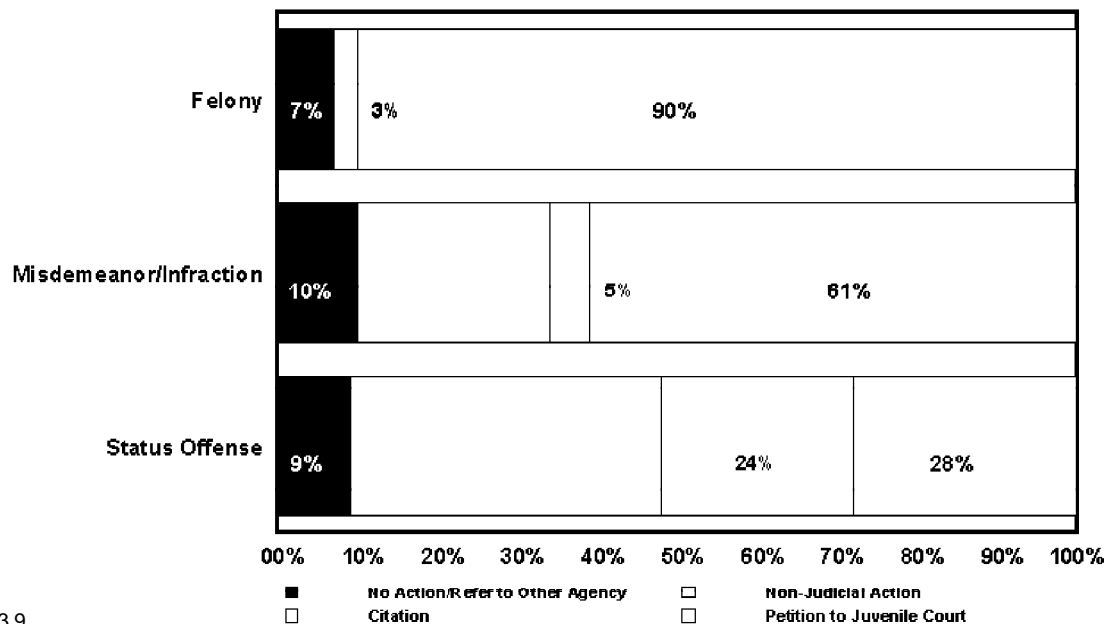
### Gender of Youth Handled by Juvenile Court, 1994; How Cases Were Handled at Intake by Offense Category, 1994

#### Gender of Youth Handled by Juvenile Court, 1994



Source: Table 3.8

#### How Cases Were Handled At Juvenile Court Intake, 1994



Source: Table 3.9

## JUVENILE COURT

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### Type of offenses filed in Juvenile Court, 1988 to 1994

- ❖ The number of offenses filed in Juvenile Court increased by 20,710 between 1988 and 1994. This represents a dramatic 85.3% increase in the number of total offenses filed in Juvenile Court during the past seven years. The rate of increase became larger between 1991 and 1992. This one year jump is similar to the increase noted in 1992 in total referrals to Juvenile Court.
- ❖ The large increase in petitions filed to Juvenile Court does not appear to be created by a change in the type of offenses being filed. The proportion of the different types of offenses filed in Juvenile Court is very stable over the period examined. However, looking at raw numbers rather than proportions, there are increases in the number of offenses filed on between 1988 and 1994. Person felony offense petitions increased 120% (814 additional petitions); property felony offense petitions increased 76% (2,698 additional petitions); public order felony petitions increased 146% (414 additional petitions); misdemeanor/infracton petitions increased 84% (14,557 additional petitions); and status offense petitions increased 96% (2,227 additional petitions).

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### POINT OF INTEREST

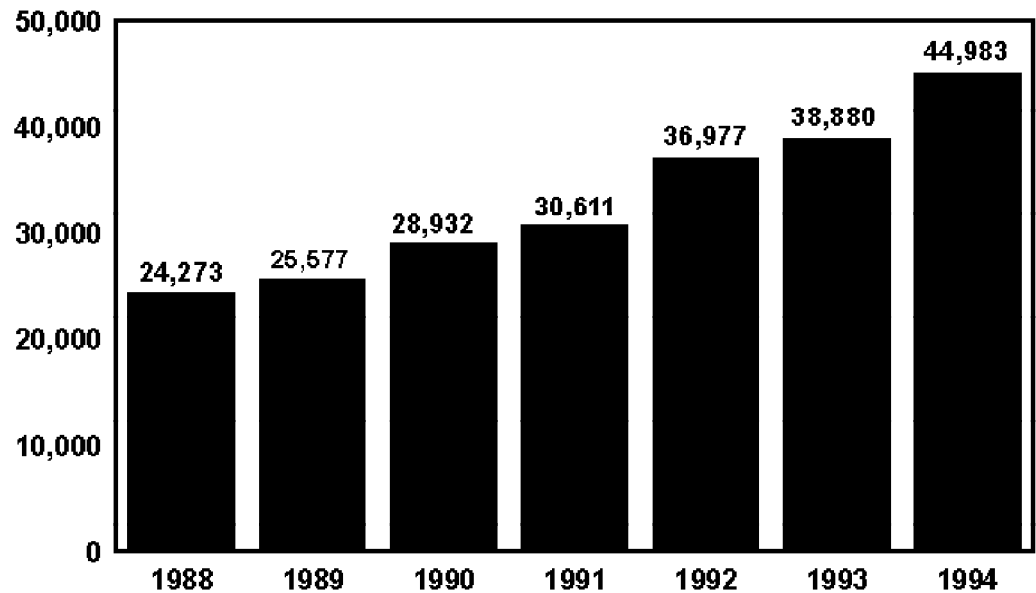
Over the past seven years, total juvenile criminal referrals have increased by 58.2% while the offenses filed in Juvenile Court have increased 85.3% over the same period. It is clear that there have been large increases in the amount of offenses filed in Juvenile Court. It is possible that the discrepancy between the increase in referrals and the increase in offenses filed could be accounted for by an increasing percentage of criminal referrals being petitioned to the Juvenile Court. Also, it must be remembered that one referral may contain several offenses.

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## Chart 3.4

### Total Offenses Filed in Juvenile Court and Offenses Filed by Offense Category, 1988 to 1994

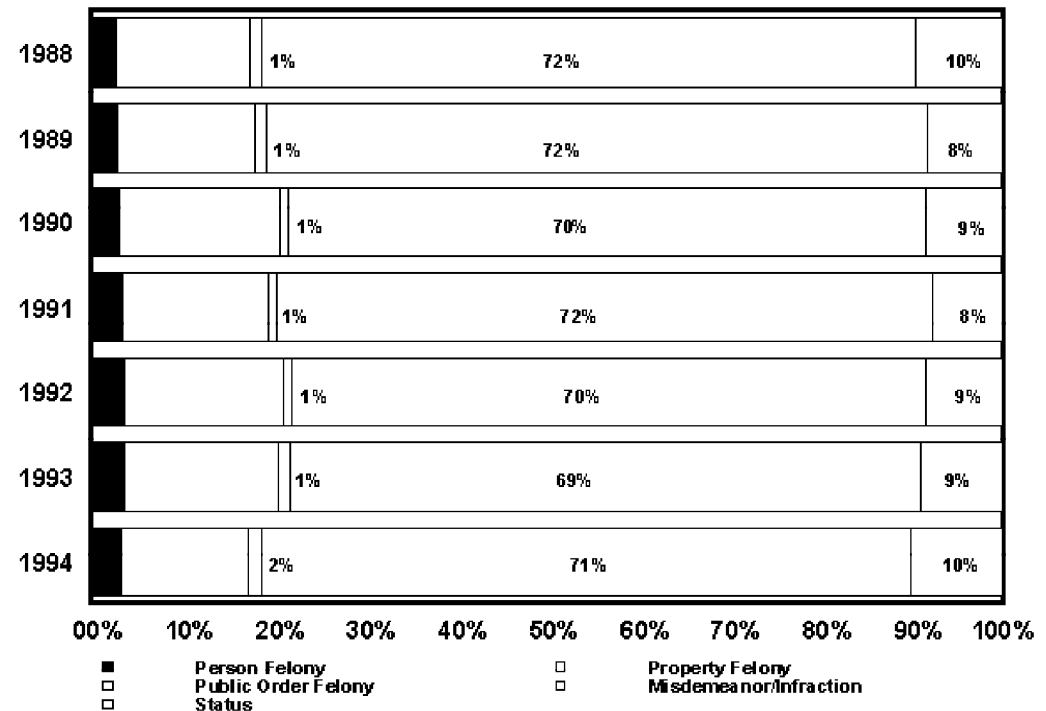
#### Total Offenses Filed in Juvenile Court



Source: Table 3.10

Offenses filed include all offenses reported even if they were one part of a single criminal episode or referral with other offenses.

#### Offenses Filed in Juvenile Court by Offense Category



Source: Table 3.10

Offenses filed include all offenses reported even if they were one part of a single criminal episode or referral with other offenses.

## JUVENILE COURT

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### Number of petitions disposed and average days to final disposition, 1991 to 1994

- ✿ The number of petitions disposed by the Juvenile Court between 1991 and 1994 increased by 35.3%, translating to 6,090 additional petitions disposed by the Juvenile Court in 1994 compared to 1991.
  
- ✿ Between 1991 and 1994, it took the Juvenile Court approximately the same average number of days to dispose of both felony and misdemeanor/infraction petitions. In comparison, the Court disposed of status offense petitions in fewer average days. On average, between 1991 and 1994, it took the Juvenile Court just over two months to dispose of felony, misdemeanor, and infraction petitions. It took the Court, on average, approximately a month and a half to dispose of status offense petitions. On average, it took the Court two more days in 1994 to dispose of a felony petition as compared to 1991; it took the Court eight fewer days in 1994 to dispose of a misdemeanor/infraction petition as compared to 1991; and it took the Court seven fewer days in 1994 to dispose of a status offense petition as compared to 1991.

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### POINT OF INTEREST

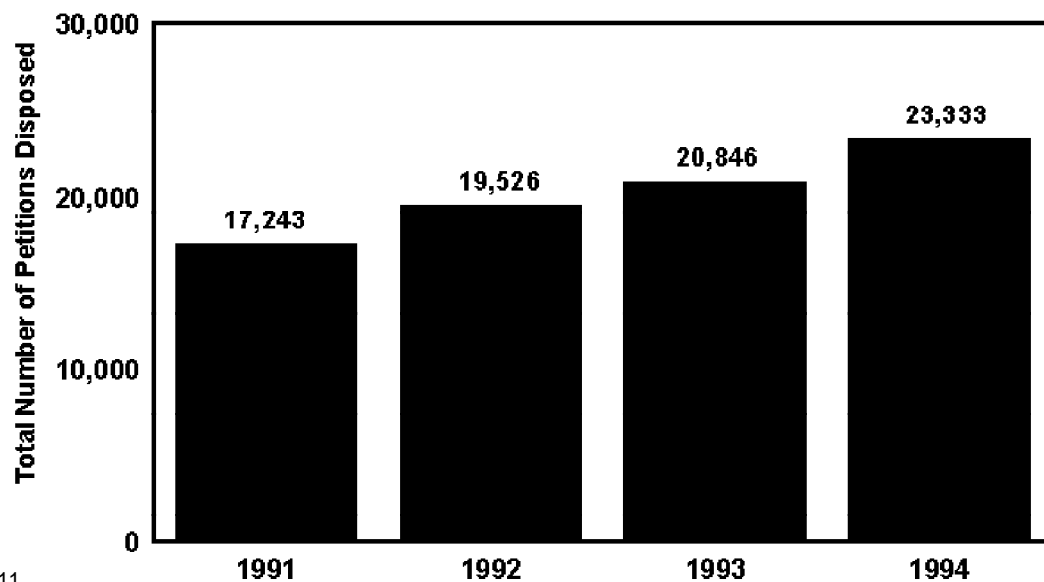
Although the number of offenses filed in Juvenile Court have increased over the past four years, more juvenile court judges have been added to the Court (most of which are the result of the Child Welfare Reform Act). In just three years, Utah's Juvenile Court bench has increased by 50%, from 14 to 21 judges. This may explain how the Court has been able to increase the number of petitions disposed without changing the amount of time it takes to dispose of cases.

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## Chart 3.5

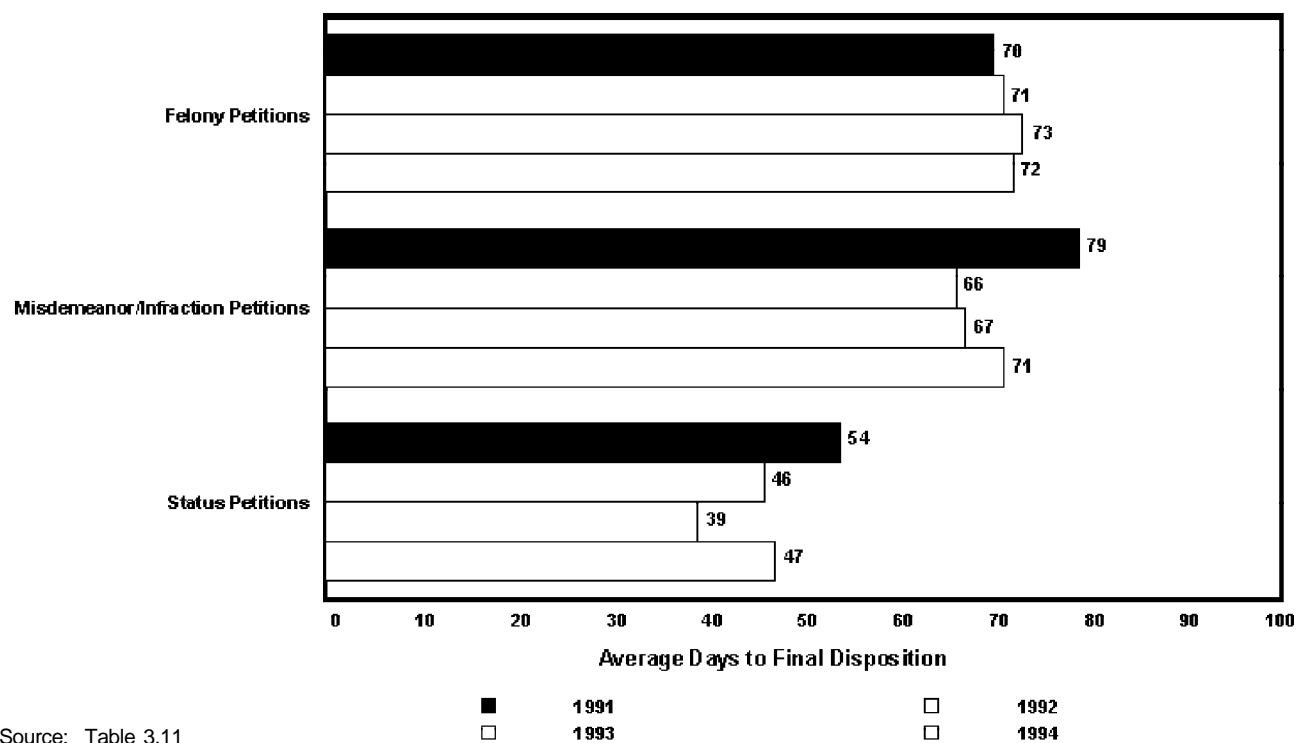
### Total Juvenile Court Petitions Disposed & Average Days to Final Disposition, 1991 to 1994

#### Total Petitions Disposed



Source: Table 3.11

#### Average Days to Final Disposition



Source: Table 3.11

## JUVENILE COURT

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### Number and ages of juvenile probationers, 1989 to 1994

***For more information regarding Juvenile Court Probation sanctions, please refer to Page 6.***

- ❖ The number of juveniles on probation at the end of the year increased 34.3%, or by 383 youth, between 1989 and 1994. However, between 1989 and 1993, juveniles on probation at the end of the year increased by only 16%, or 179 youth. The largest increase of juveniles on probation occurred between 1993 and 1994.
- ❖ Between 1989 and 1994, the average age of juvenile probationers decreased. The average age of probationers decreased from 16.62 years of age in 1989 to 16.53 years of age in 1994, representing a .5% decline in the average age of juvenile probationers over the past seven years.

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### POINT OF INTEREST

Once again we see that the age of the juveniles in the juvenile justice system has not changed much over the past several years. The average age of juveniles on probation decreased, but only by .5% over the six years examined.

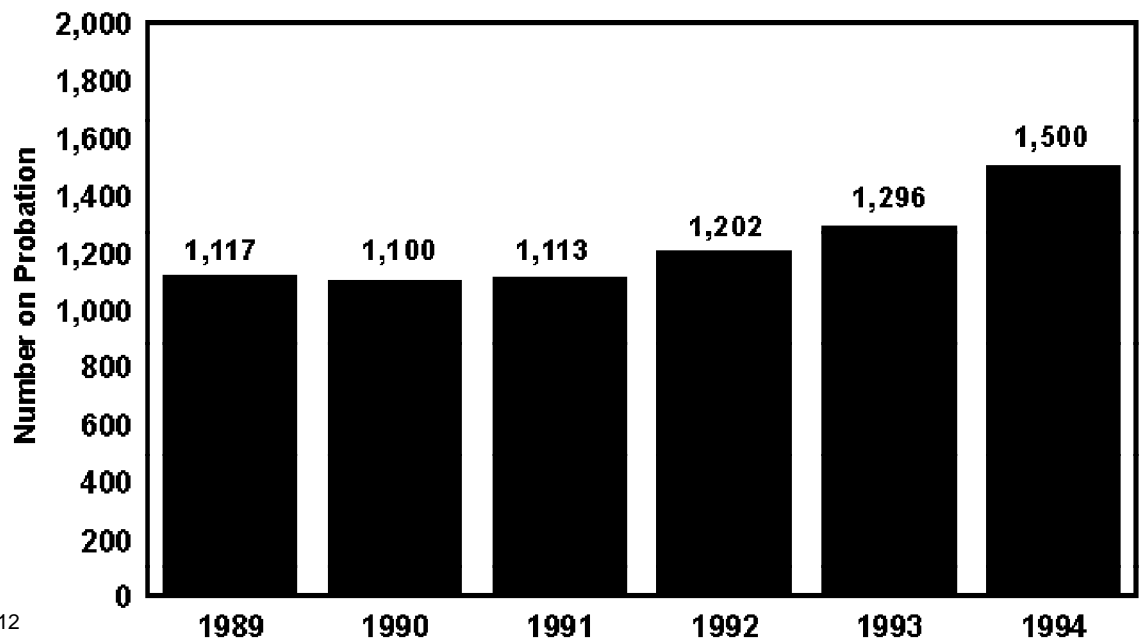
The number of juveniles on probation increased by 34.3% over the past six years. The number of juvenile probation officers kept pace by increasing 33.0% in the past three years.

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## Chart 3.6

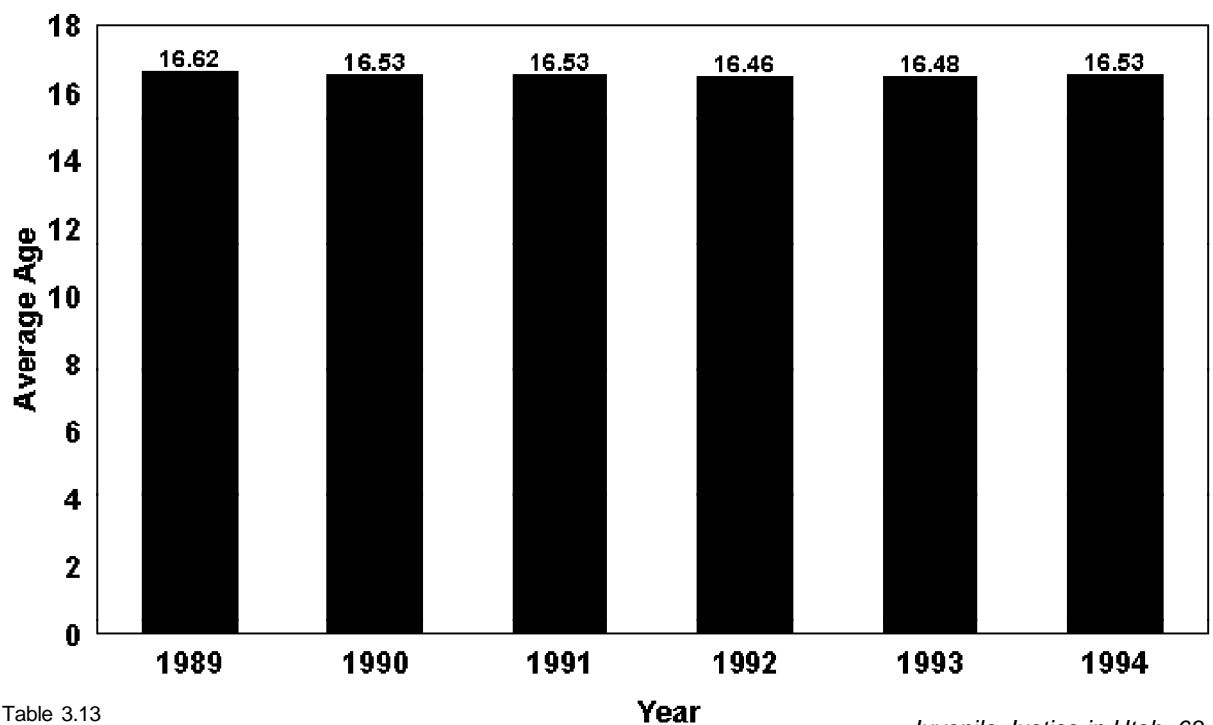
Juveniles On Probation At the End the Year, 1989 to 1994;  
Age of Juveniles On Probation, 1989 to 1994

Juveniles On Probation At  
the End of the Year



Source: Table 3.12

Average Age of  
Juveniles On Probation



Source: Table 3.13

## JUVENILE COURT

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### **Average offense history of juvenile probationers and average offenses committed by juveniles after a probation placement**

- ❖ The average offense history of juvenile probationers increased between 1990 and 1994. The average felony history of juvenile probationers increased 20.9% from 3.49 felonies to 4.22 felonies. The average misdemeanor history of juvenile probationers increased 16.2% from 10.83 misdemeanors to 12.58 misdemeanors. The average status offense history of juvenile probationers increased 28.1% from 1.96 status offenses to 2.51 status offenses.
- ❖ In 1994, the average probationer had over four felony convictions, nearly 13 misdemeanor convictions, and more than two status offense convictions.
- ❖ Looking at offenses after a probation placement for past probationers who turned 18 during 1990 to 1994, it appears that the average number of felony offenses after probation increased (14.7%) while the average number of misdemeanor and status offenses decreased (5.8% and 2.6% respectively). After a probation placement for those turning 18 during 1994, the average youth committed nearly two felonies, six misdemeanors, and one status offense.

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### **POINT OF INTEREST**

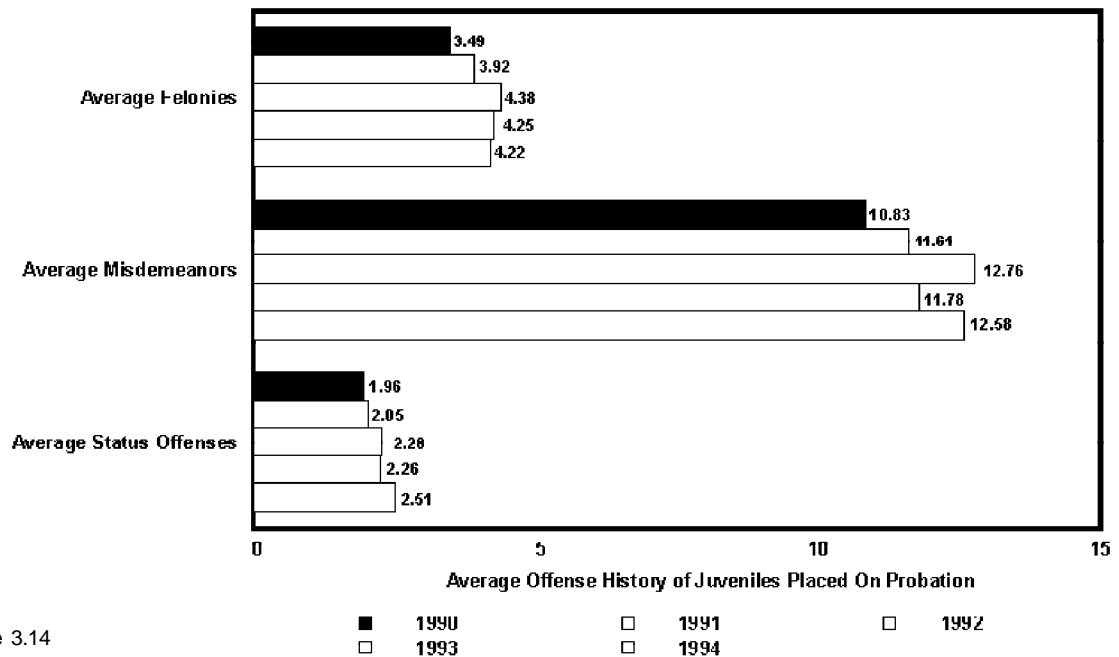
The two adjacent figures seem to indicate that although juvenile probationers continue criminal offending after probation, on average they have fewer offenses after the probation placement than they had prior to the probation placement. In every offense category, there is a 50% reduction of average offenses after probation compared to the average offense history of youth on probation.

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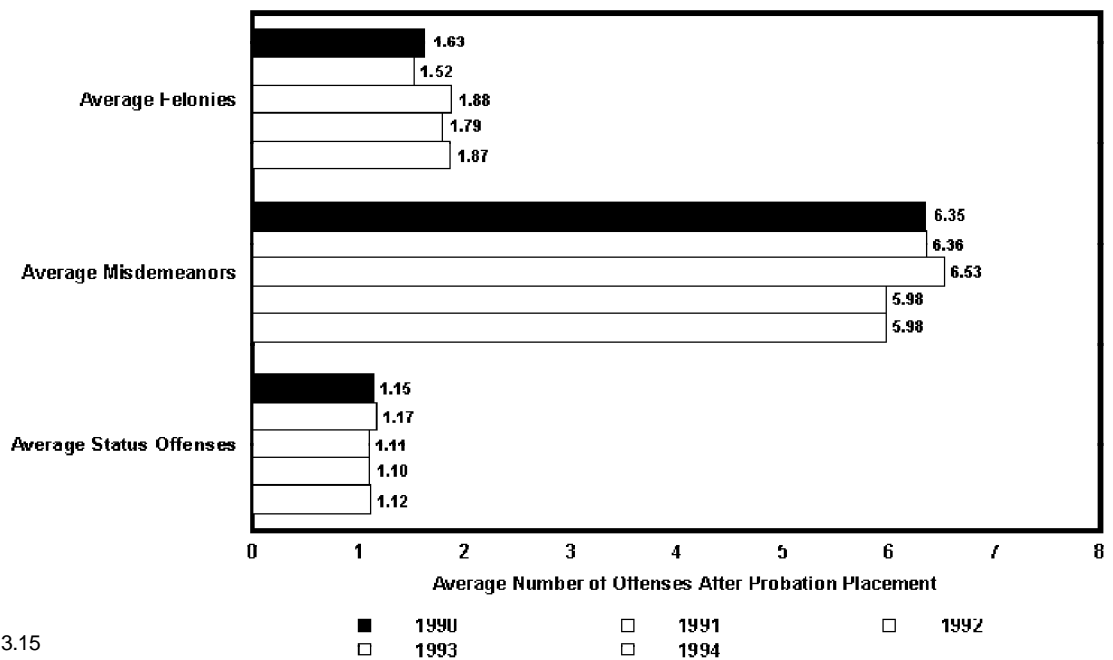
## Chart 3.7

### Average Offense History of Juvenile Probationers & Average Offenses After Juvenile Probation Placement, 1990 to 1994

#### Average Offense History of Juvenile Probationers



#### Average Offenses After Juvenile Probation Placement



## JUVENILE COURT

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***For more information regarding monetary sanctions, please refer to Page 6.***

### **Juvenile probationers placed with the Division of Youth Corrections, and percent of court orders collected**

- ❖ Comparing 1990 to 1994, the percent of probationers, who before turning 18, were placed with the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) has increased. Of probationers turning 18 during 1994, 16% had an Observation and Assessment placement, 22% had a DYC community placement, and 12% had a secure facility placement.
- ❖ The percent of ordered fines/fees collected by the Juvenile Court was 74% in 1994. The success in collecting fines and fees ranged from a low of 71% (1992 & 1993) to a high of 77% (1991).
- ❖ The percent of ordered restitution collected by the Juvenile Court was 78% in 1994. The success in collecting restitution ranged from a low of 67% (1990) to a high of 84% (1991).
- ❖ The percent of ordered community service hours completed was 73% in 1994. The success in completing community service hours ranged from a low of 73% (1994) to a high of 87% (1991).

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### **POINT OF INTEREST**

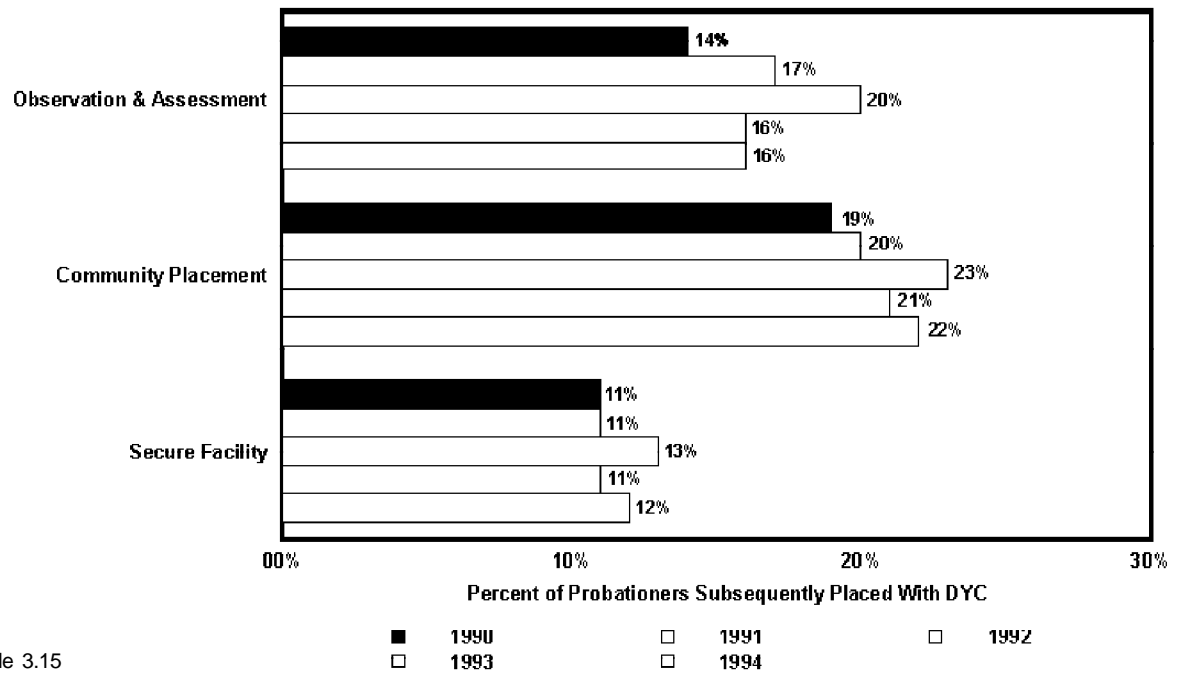
The first adjacent graph depicts the juvenile probationers who penetrated further in to the juvenile justice system from 1990 to 1994. These are juveniles who were placed on probation and subsequently required a youth corrections placement. For the juvenile probationers who turned 18 years of age over the past five years, it is clear that their rate of penetration has increased. The percent of probationers subsequently placed in Observation and Assessment increased from 14% to 16%; the percent of probationers subsequently placed in a community placement increased from 19% to 22%; and the percent of probationers subsequently placed in a secure facility increased from 11% to 12%.

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## Chart 3.8

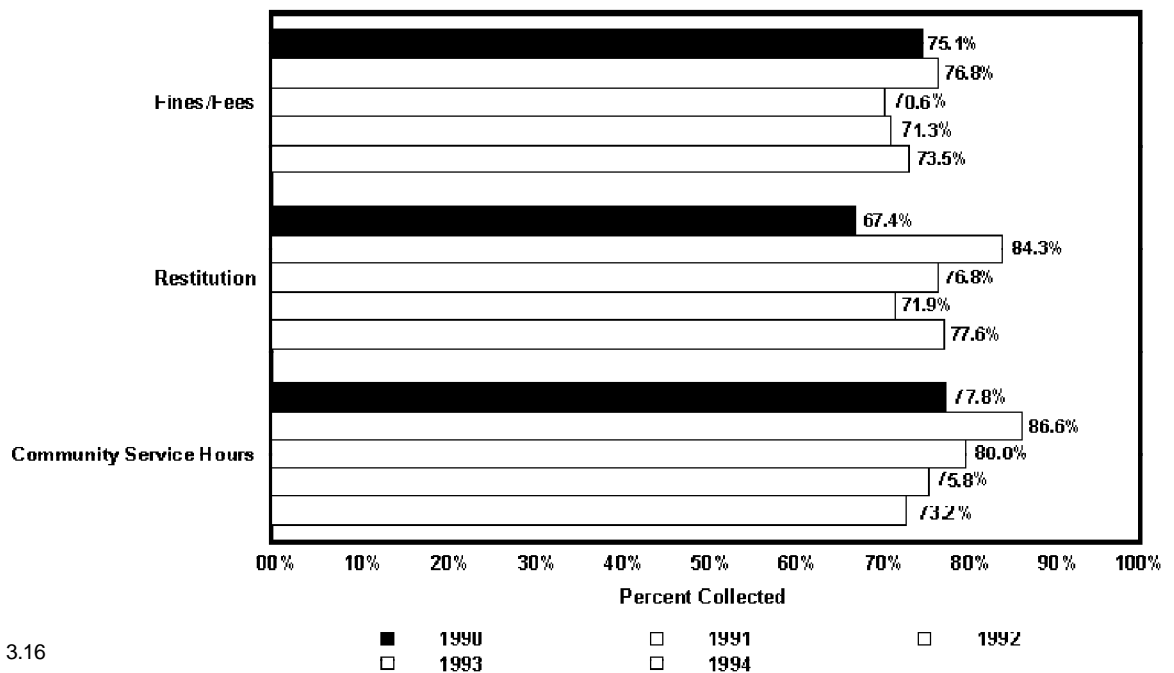
### Percent of Probationers Placed With the Division of Youth Corrections; Percent of Fines/Fees, Restitution, & Community Service Collected, 1990 to 1994

#### Percent of Probationers Placed With NYC



Source: Table 3.15

#### Percent of Fines/Fees, Restitution, & Community Service Collected



Source: Table 3.16

## **JUVENILE COURT**

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### **Juvenile fines/fees, restitution, and community service, 1990 to 1994**

- ❖ In 1994, the Juvenile Court collected \$1.31 million in fines/fees, which represents a 69.8% increase from just five years earlier. During 1994, the Court ordered \$1.78 million in fines and fees, which represents a 73.4% increase since 1990. The five year increase in Court ordered fines/fees outpaced the increase in collected fines/fees.
- ❖ In 1994, the Juvenile Court collected \$969,835 in restitution, which represents a 72.1% increase since 1990. During 1994, the Court ordered \$1.25 million in restitution, which represents a 49.6% increase since 1990. The five year increase in collected restitution outpaced the increase in ordered restitution.
- ❖ In 1994, the Juvenile Court collected 327,610 hours of community service, which represents an 87.2% increase since 1990. During 1994, 447,394 hours of community service were ordered by the Court, representing a 99.0% increase since 1990. The five year increase in ordered community service hours outpaced the increase in collected community service hours.

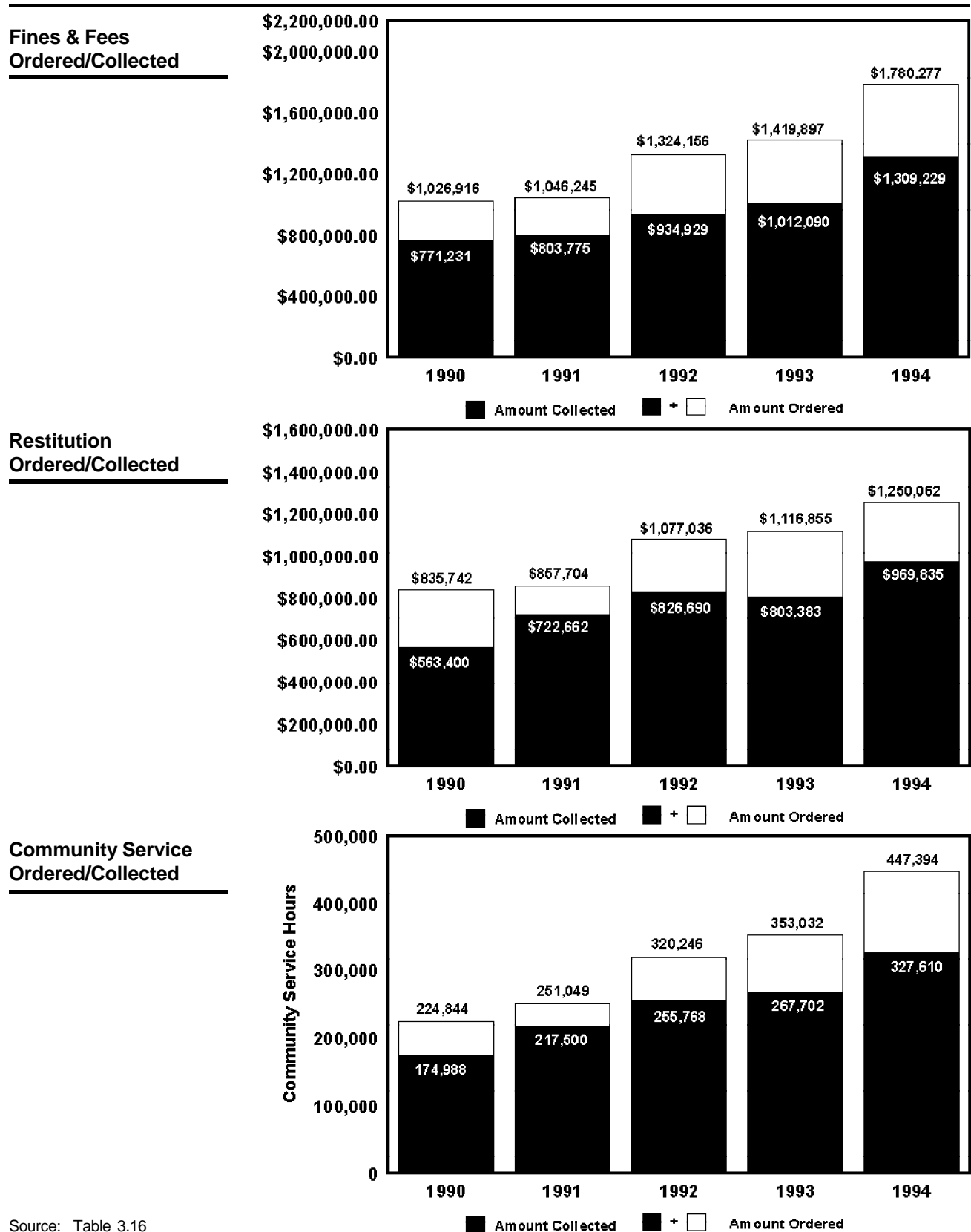
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### **POINT OF INTEREST**

The amount of monies and hours collected from juvenile offenders by the Juvenile Court is impressive. In 1994, the Court collected nearly \$2.3 million dollars and nearly 330,000 hours of community service. Equally impressive is the percent of orders that were collected. Over the past five years, the Juvenile Court has consistently collected between 70% and 80% of the ordered fines/fees, restitution, and community service hours. These are sanctions used both by the Juvenile Court Judges and by intake services through non-judicial sanctions. Often, juveniles receive a mix of sanctions. For instance, a juvenile may be placed on probation and ordered to complete a certain number of community service hours.

## Chart 3.9

### Amount of Fines/Fees, Restitution, and Community Service Ordered and Collected, 1990 to 1994



Source: Table 3.16

## **JUVENILE COURT**

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### **Comparing juveniles who turned 18 years of age in 1985, 1990, and 1994**

- ❖ It is clear that over the past decade, the percentage of the youth turning 18 years of age who have no criminal referrals has declined. In 1985, 70% of the 18 year olds had no criminal contact. By 1994, 65% of the 18 year olds had no criminal contact.
- ❖ The percent of youth turning 18 years of age who only had misdemeanor offenses increased from 23% in 1985 to 25% in 1994; the percent of youth who had three or fewer felony offenses increased from 6% to 8%; and the percent of youth who had four or more felonies increased from 1% to 2%.
- ❖ In 1994, there were 35,028 youth who turned 18 years of age. Of these, 22,915 youth had no contact with the Court for misdemeanor or felony offenses; 8,641 youth who had contact with the Court had misdemeanor offenses only; 2,851 youth who had contact with the Court had three or fewer felony offenses; and 621 youth who had contact with the Court had four or more felony offenses.

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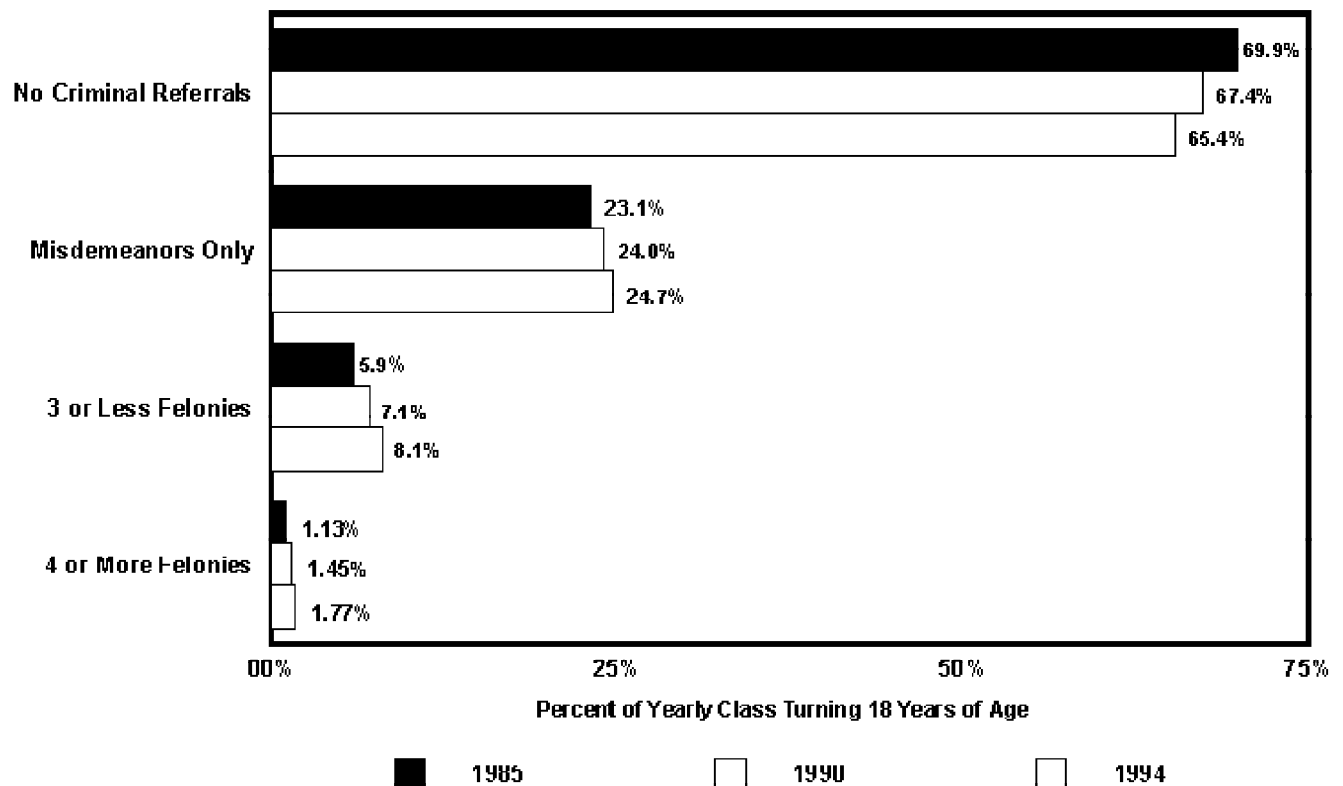
### **POINT OF INTEREST**

These views of youth turning 18 years of age provide a picture of a cohort's experiences with the juvenile justice system. It is interesting to note that of all of the juveniles who turned 18 years of age during 1994, 9.9% had contact with the Juvenile Court for a felony offense of any type during their youth. Over one-third of the juveniles turning 18 years of age during 1994 had contact with the Juvenile Court for either a felony offense or a misdemeanor offense.

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## Chart 3.10

### Comparison of the Graduating Classes of 1985, 1990, & 1994 and Their Criminal Contact With Juvenile Court



Source: Table 3.17

